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ECHOES FROM NAPLES

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ECHOES FROM NAPLES

ECHOES FROM NAPLES

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

HOLCOMBE INGLEBY

With Illustrations by his Wife

LONDON

TRÜBNER & CO., LUDGATE HILL

1888

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“ A thing slipped idly from me.
“ Our poesy is as a gum, which oozes
“ From whence 'tis nourished ; the fire i' the flint
“ Shows not till it be struck ; our gentle flame
“ Provokes itself, and, like the current, flies
“ Each bound it chafes.”

—*Timon of Athens.*

ECHOES FROM NAPLES.



Bella Napoli.¹

WHERE the bright moonbeams
Dance on the ocean,
Where the Zephyr whispers
With gentle emotion,
Come to my little bark,
Come without fear,
Santa Lucia ! Santa Lucia !

Under the awning
Bring out the wine,
Still is the evening
Serenely divine.
Who will not seek thy sweet
Form to be near ?
Santa Lucia ! Santa Lucia !

¹ It is scarcely necessary to state that this is a translation of the well-known Neapolitan song.

Water so motionless,
Zephyr so fair,
Make the gay mariner
Bury his care ;
Hailing with joy the sweet
Sound in his ear,
Santa Lucia ! Santa Lucia !

With the soft Zephyr
Playing around,
Lightly my little bark
Leaps to the sound—
Come away, Passengers,
Come quickly here,
Santa Lucia ! Santa Lucia !

O bella Napoli !
Happy the earth
Where smiled the Creator
In giving thee birth !
The empire of Harmony
Dost thou appear,
Santa Lucia ! Santa Lucia !

The New Year.

WITH frost and snow, with stormy blast
The New Year ushers in his reign,
Unfeelingly we hail at last
His aged predecessor's wane ;
Though cold his touch, his heart is warm,
And what care we for raging storm
If cheery hearth reflect our form ?

How doth the year our hopes repay ?
We reckon losses, count the gains ;
Alas ! how light the pleasures weigh
When set in balance with the pains !
A brother sleeping 'neath the ground,
A friend, whose voice will never sound
Again to summon us around !

Searchings of heart for sins committed !
The old year tells its long sad tale ;
Are we to be more blamed than pitied
When earnest resolutions fail ?

Fragile as web e'er spider spun,
Melting like snow before the sun,
By tempter's hand our vows undone !

But hearken to the midnight chime
That's borne along on formless wings,
As if to chronicle dead time
And tell us that new life upsprings ;
Hark ! how its ringing notes implore us,
The future lies untrod before us,
The New Year will our hopes restore us !

No longer now "What might have been !"
Our banner is inscribed "Shall be" ;
Good resolutions from within
Will yield in time a fruitful tree.
The chime now rings out loud and long,
"Let us in good resolves be strong,"
This is the joyful New Year's song !

10th March 1888.

THOU mother of a noble brood !
Well may'st thou boast that on thy throne
There shines a star, and shines alone,
The Queen of Womanhood !

And, Britain, be thou no less proud
That from her womb hath sprung a line,
Whose virtues like the sunlight shine,
Undimmed by passing cloud.

And thou, O Prince, make it thy boast
That, though her people flourish free,
Untarnished shines their loyalty,
Proclaimed from coast to coast.

It seems but yesterday that o'er
The ocean home with conscious pride
Thou brought'st thy beauteous northern bride
Back from a kindred shore,

Amidst the thunders of a throng,
Whose echoes bounded back again
To swell in undiminished strain
The universal song,

“God bless the Prince of Wales ! God bless
“Brave Denmark’s sweetest, fairest flower !
“May Heaven smile upon this hour,
“And seal their happiness !”

’Tis but as yesterday, and yet
What changes restless Time hath wrought !
What dire calamities hath brought
The glass he loves to set !

We speak of him with bated breath,
With gentle hand we touch the sore,
Whose treasured life-blood flowed before
The jealous striker, Death.

A daughter loved at duty’s call
And love’s quick prompting grasped Death’s hand,
Weaving a pattern for our land
Auto-memorial.

A son, no less beloved, for whom
Life's rays had ever feebly shone,
Death laid his heavy hand upon,
 Whenas the flower did bloom.

But thou, O Prince, art hap'ly free ;
Within the circle of thy home
May the intruder never come
 To rob thy sanctuary !

Once, only once, did he attack
Thee, cross thy threshold, mount thy stairs ;
God heard a stricken nation's prayers,
 And drove th' intruder back.

And now there twine to cheer thy hearth
Fair olive branches round thy door ;
Full five and twenty summers more
 May'st thou direct their path !

Long may'st thou live ! Long may thy fair
And Royal partner to thee give
Her sweet companionship ! Long live—
 God bless—Great Britain's Heir !

Love's Captive.

LOVE! let me put a seal upon those lips of thine with
mine,
And round about that neck of snow these arms of mine
entwine;
Upon my breast that graceful head for which I pine
recline,
So then I envy not the Gods their loves that shine divine.
List to the sweetly-tuning birds! of many a thing they
sing,
Of Love, of joy, grief, hope, despair, of gentle Spring—
outring
Their notes—but all for Love, for him they sow, they
reap, they keep
Their jealous vigils, dream of him, when silent, deep-
asleep.
So run my thoughts ; by night, by day, in dreams, awake,
I make
Sweet pictures of our happiness ; and for thy sake forsake

All other joys ; then crowd on me the doubts, the fears,
and tears

Well up ; but that my tale may reach thy willing ears,
hope cheers

My solitary heart—that heart which is not mine, but
thine,

O give thine in return, so I may say, “Not thine, but
mine !”

Found at Sark

(SEPT. 1887).

UNDER the crags of a dark frowning cliff,
Where the wind from the ocean blows chilly and stiff,
Where the waves rise up black to the black-leaden sky
And tear from its moorings the seaweed to die,
Where the solitary sea-bird is making his moan,
To the howls of the wind-blast according his tone,
Where many a thing once rejoicing in life
Is tossed on the shore in the elements' strife,
What a time, what a place for a body to lie,
Discarded by ocean, unloved by the sky !

Why shrink back in terror ? Why turn we away ?
Poor lifeless humanity, harmless and— Nay !
Touch it not roughly—once it was fair,
God's image it was that now lieth there

Where did it come from? What was its name?
 Entangled in seaweed—poor shattered frame—
 Swept by a merciless wave from the deck
 Of some ship that has foundered, a sea-battered wreck?
 Or facing stern death without hope by his own——?
 Nay! think of him tenderly, now that he's gone;
 His spirit is fled; this is only a shell
 Washed up by the sea's irresistible swell.

Had he a friend in the wide world—or none?
 Beat there a heart in accord with his—one?
 Had he no children to love him—no wife
 Waiting for, watching for him dear as life—
 This form that has rudely been cast on the beach,
 Out of reach of the buffet of waves, out of reach
 Of the world's rough usage, its scorn and its spite,
 Thin-veiling its wrongs 'neath a shadow of right?
 What shall we do with him? Where shall we lay him?
 In flowers of pitiless ocean array him?
 Say one short prayer, as if for a friend?
 God rest his poor soul, 'tis a terrible end—
 And the waves not a moment their roaring suspend.

* * * * *

The sun as he sank peeped forth for a while,
 And lit up the face of the cliff with a smile;

The sea-bird had changed his note of imploring,
The ocean had stilled its monotonous roaring ;
For Nature had bidden the storm-blast to cease
When the poor battered wanderer rested in peace.

C. M. I.

ONE victim more—

One ripe in scholarship, though not in years ;
To him, more than to most, it was permitted
To pluck the fruit from off the tree of knowledge,
Which, like a loan on usury, repaid
Itself with interest a hundredfold.
With more than common force and skill acknowledged
The pen he wielded ; critic unsparing, keen
As sharp-edged razor from the whetstone, yet
To merit just. Science to him was like
A book unfolded, and philosophy
His daily study ; poetry and music,
Twin sisters, dwelt within him. While his ear,
Unrivalled, drank in sweetest melody,
His tuneful voice imparted it to others.
Children he fondly loved ; both young and old

Shed tears of sorrow at the deadly stroke
Which left them mourners. O'er his grave be writ,
In shining letters, these his attributes,
"Ripe learning, gentleness, simplicity."

The River.¹

SPRUNG from the glacier and the melting snows
Through the ravine tumultuously it dashes,
And prodigal of self-inflicted blows
Its waters fiercely lashes.

Fed with innumerable bubbling rills,
Its volume momentarily increasing,
Its voice reverberating through the hills
In thunders never ceasing,

No pause, no rest it knows ; by day, by night
It hurtles down the winding mountain gorges,
Emitting ever in its breathless flight
A roar like furnaced forges.

And at the mountain's base a torrent still,
Into a mighty river slowly growing,
It flows majestically, to fulfil
The debt to Nature owing ;

¹ Suggested by C. M. I.'s "Glacier."

Onwards and ever onwards in its race,
Till, from its first design diverted never,
It folds the ocean in a long embrace,
And finds its home for ever.

To Sleep.

SLEEP, thou'rt more favoured than the flower
 My Love's caressing ;
When Philomel in leafy bower
 His Love's addressing,
My Love will clasp thee to her breast,
Oh ! would that I were so caressed !

And thou art like a maiden fair,
 For all men woo thee ;
'Tis thou alone can'st banish care,
 Which men bring to thee,
And cast their burdens at thy feet,
A never-failing mercy-seat.

Thou'rt called a counterfeit of Death
 From whom men run,
And fondly spend their last faint breath
 His grasp to shun ;
Yet how much sweeter thee they deem
Than Lethe's ever-rolling stream !



The Farina.

ALL taut and ready there, my boys ?—Then up the anchor
heave,

Set flying jib and top-sail too, and see what she'll achieve ;
We'll make our dainty little clipper fly before the breeze,
And demonstrate that she's the craft to ride upon the
seas.

The mountain smoke assures us now that Auster will be
steady,

But naught we'll leave to Fortune's hand, but keep our
tackle ready,

Although the haze upon yon island tells us that the breeze
Is but the summer's breath that rustles lightly through the
trees.

See, as the golden sundrops play upon the dancing waves,
How splendidly the little craft on Ocean's lap behaves !
She mounts the mighty roller's backs that break upon the
 shore,
That foam, and froth, and bellow forth a never-ceasing
 roar.
And now we'll turn her head about and try another tack,
'Tis all the same to our bonny craft, her pace she will not
 slack,
Now high, now low, now on her side, now cutting through
 the sea
At a galloping pace, as though in a race, right merry and
 fearlessly ;
Then one more tack, and in safety back she homewards
 swiftly flies—
And at anchor's chain, in harbour again, now motionless
 she lies.

Doubt.

THE foolish act, the sinful deed,
Is man responsible for all
The countless ills laid to his charge
Since Adam's fall?

If in his nature, deep ingrained,
Lies unperceived the germ of sin,
Why is he tangled in the web
He did not spin?

Doth not a chain of circumstance
Encircle each man with its coil,
And guide him in his daily walk
Of strife and toil?

Or if perchance through strength of will
He keep the tenor of his way,
And give to tempting circumstance
A scornful "Nay;"

What praise is due to such an one
Who exercises but the power,
That came into the world with him,
A natal dower?

Or if perchance his will be weak,
And, yielding to the tempter's lay,
He, unresisting, pluck the fruit
And answer "Yea ;"

What blame is due to such an one,
Whom Nature thus so poorly clad
With weapons for the fray, and strength
Of will forbade?

Should man be held responsible
That he is cast into a mould,
Which other hands have fashioned out
Of sullied gold?

It cannot be ; yet Scripture saith
That we must bear the sins of others
And nobly suffer for the fault
Which is another's.

And father's sins are visited
Upon succeeding generations,
And individuals reap the fruit
Of erring nations.

And earthly laws take little ken
That circumstances make the man
And drag him down against his will
And passions fan,

Which in a better sphere would keep
The bounds that Nature's laws ordain,
Not fed upon a vicious soil
And poisoned grain.

In truth, the road is drear and dark,
We grope our way through blinding smoke,
And painfully incline our necks
To bear the yoke.

We seem to see that man is but
The sport of laws that are not just,
With this reward to crown his life—
The mouldering dust.

We see the Scriptural reward,
We grasp it as a ray of light,
That greets the storm-tossed mariner
In pitchy night.

And though we gladly press it close
And in its sunny promise bask,
We dare not blindly read the Word,
But humbly ask ;

What is religion—if not just ?
Why should the curse of one man blight
Whole generations, bearing wrong
Instead of right ?

And if the hope of future life,
That beacon on a stormy sea,
Be swept away before our new
Philosophy ;

And like a boat that's cast adrift,
We helpless float upon the main,
And lift our hands in agony,
And pray—in vain !

What solace have we for the ills
Entailed on man since Adam's fall,
If, when death holds us in his grasp,
We lose our all?

No justice to be found on earth !
No well-earned recompense above !
No light to cheer us on our way !
No Saviour's love !

J. M. T.

(IN MEMORIAM).

HE wrought at his work with a manly grace,
Nor fame nor fortune desiring,
And none but rejoice to have looked on that face
To nobler actions inspiring ;
And he cherished the poor, and relieved their needs,
With a love that made them adore him,
And little we doubt that his noble deeds
Have passed into heaven before him.

All manly sports were as breath to him,
Yet he placed them below his calling,
And his cup of joy was filled to the brim
If he saved a brother from falling ;
His mission to preach, to practise still more
Was a duty he never neglected,
Alas ! that his bark has quitted our shore,
'Mongst the chosen of heaven elected.

And though he be gone, yet a legacy rich
To console our great loss he hath left us,
A name that will dwell in our heart's deepest niche
In the place of what Heaven bereft us ;
Let us never repine that the one we loved best
Has gone to the home of his asking,
To a shelter from storm, to a haven of rest,
In a sunshine of love ever basking.



Santa Lucia.

SANTA Lucia ! Santa Lucia !
Spot ever cherished, name ever dear,
Sung of in verse, and famous in story,
Of Ocean the pride, of Naples the glory.
Language would fail to tell how I love thee,
Set in thy bed of blue, deep blue above thee,
Memories crowd on me, drawing the tear,
Santa Lucia ! Santa Lucia !

Love.

OH ! fear thee not the noontide heat !
It calleth up a zephyr sweet
To play upon the parching trees
That dip their tresses in the breeze,
And joyfully its advent greet.

Come, an thou wilt, with naked feet,
So that thy longed-for step be fleet,
Whose dainty tread is light as air,
Or finest thread of Gossamer ;
Oh ! hasten, love, to our retreat !

In deep expectancy doth beat
My heart, that hath in thee its seat ;
I long to feel thy presence near,
To take thee to my bosom, dear,
And make our happiness complete.

And when that I a kiss entreat,
What nectar tasteth half so sweet
As from those ruby lips of thine
The essence of a love divine
I deeply quaff, when our lips meet ?

The Storm.

DID ever you hear such a terrible night ?
The wind put to silence the mountainous wave
That lashed the cliff's base with its ponderous might,
As though it were consciously digging man's grave
In angry spite.

And the hailstones fell thickly and whitened the ground,
And our little house shook like a quivering leaf,
And we knew that the furious raging of sound
Would spread in its train inconsolable grief
And disaster around.

Our thoughts had been silently bent on the sea—
That sea with its thousand and one hungry jaws,
Whose waters, delighting and dancing with glee,
Obey to the death our stern nature's laws
And Heaven's decree,

When out of the darkness there came a deep boom—
The boom of a gun sounding clear as a bell,
And we saw in the distance a stately ship loom ;
God grant that it was not a funeral knell
That was sounding its doom !

But onwards it rushed right on to the rock
At the foot of the cliff where the mad waves dashed,
And it struck the fell peak with a thundering shock,
And loudly its timbers above the din crashed
In a deadly lock.

And there it lay fast, the sport of the sea,
That swept o'er its deck with a merciless force,
And the sailors awaited their death agony,
As wave followed wave with no touch of remorse,
And death-giving glee.

* * * * *

The morning sun shone on a sad, sad scene,
For the ocean was covered with floating wreck,
And corpses lay stretched on the seaweed green
That the waves had collected their pillows to deck,
Now rid of their spleen.

And the softest and warmest of zephyrs now played
On the cheeks of the men they had just robbed of life,
As if to atone for the havoc they made
In that terrible clamour and pitiless strife,
To rest now laid.



On Ascending Vesuvius.

O'ER petrified and rugged fields of lava
We wandered, as 'mongst heaps of corpses slain ¹
Upon some Waterloo or Balaclava,
When strife is hushed and Death rules o'er the plain ;
Whose morning sun has heralded the glory
That crowns the victors when the battle's won,
Whose evening breeze has blown a sadder story
Of dying warrior forms whose day is done.

¹ Two out of the three who composed our party agreed that the twisted heaps of lava resembled (in our imagination) a confused mass of men and horses lying huddled together. We simultaneously thought of the battlefield.

Yon torpid mass was erst with life instinct,
And down the mountain marched with fiery tread,
To maddening death and fell disaster linked,
With grimy dust and hissing vapours wed ;
It trees uprooted, rent the rocks asunder,
It levelled houses, burst upon the plain,
It shook the earth with rolls of buried thunder
Till mankind fled in terror to the main.

And there it lies, a silent, crumpled heap,
Blackening the face of nature with its form,
Sleeping for ever an eternal sleep,
A monument of Earth's tempestuous storm ;
We clambered o'er its surface deep in wonder,
And speculated whence it living came,
We prayed that nevermore might rocks asunder
Be rent, nor earth imprisoned in her flame.

A. N. R.

WHAT is the noblest aim of man's brief life ?

What but to do his duty, to fulfil
The task allotted, to endure the strife,
With stern resolve to mitigate the ill
That dogs man's footstep wheresoe'er he tread,
And turns life's pleasures to the doer's dread ?

Of barren deeds I sing not, nor of one
Who high upon the beacon set his light,
Where men might gaze and say, "See, what a sun
Shines down upon us from yon giddy height !"
Whose rays, extinguished, succour man no more,
But leave him colder, poorer, than before.

Rather I sing of one who, early thrown
Upon the breakers of life's stormy sea,
Swift cleaves them, and, unaided, by his own
Endeavour, gains the shelter of the lee,
Where resting not upon the welcome strand,
For other's use he keeps his strong right hand.

I sing of one who was a steadfast friend,
Of one who was a loved and loving brother,
Of one who would his life-blood freely spend,
If, by so spending, he could save another,
Of one who followed closely, as he could,
His noble Master's steps, in doing good.

I stood beside the grave in fancy bound,
I saw the body gently laid to rest,
I heard the sobs of those that stood around,
I knew his spirit harboured with the blest ;
I could not weep, for him I felt no pain,
Our grievous loss to him was greatest gain.

Why mourn we that he died in distant lands,
That far away from home his ashes lie ?
No stretch of earth or sea can burst the bands
That bind us to his cherished memory ;
Fresh in our lives remains that green bright spot,
That joy of memory, which fadeth not.

And if we marvel that he's called away,
When life is at the threshold, just in bloom,
And ask what grievous fault upon him lay,
That Thou, O Lord, didst seal his early doom ?
"To have him fall no more," the poet sings,
"For love" it was Thou early gav'st him wings.

On a Menu.

How fleeting is life's dearest pleasure !
How meagre Time's allotted measure !
Who can supply the empty blanks
That absent friends make in our ranks ?
We cannot choose but sorely weep
When Time's long fingers make their sweep ;
A week's a day, so quick it passes,
But come, my friends, fill up your glasses,
Your presence here has brought us gladness,
We will not part from you in sadness !

The Friend's Return.

RETURNING friends, like faces in the fire,
Bring back forgotten pictures of the past,
Reanimate and kindle from its pyre
The love on which dead ashes have been cast ;
Such love we joy to snatch from Time's sharp fangs
Round which the sweetest scented memory hangs.

An Incident of the Revolution, 1792.¹

'Tis a tumbrel drawn at a funeral pace,
The inmates are closing their earthly race,
But one looks defiant and spurns at the crowd
Who are surging around and shouting aloud,
 "Off with his head,
 "Hurrah for the Red,
" 'Tis time, high time, we were reigning instead ! "

But though death be his goal, he is happy and calm,
A portrait is seen in his outstretched palm,
And ever anon he looks at the face,
While the crowd keeps shouting with angry grimace,
 "Off with his head,
 "Hurrah for the Red,
" This love-lorn villain with ' Madame ' we'll wed ! "

¹ Suggested by the " Tale of Two Cities."

'Twas not for a lover, nor yet for a wife,
But only a friend doomed to forfeit his life,
For whom he was giving his life-blood instead,
Unmindful of death and unconscious of dread,
Or the maddened crowd
Which kept shouting aloud,
"To hell, to hell with this 'Aristo' proud!"

He stepped from the cart with a measured pace,
And a smile full of gladness spread over his face,
As he walked to the brink of eternity dread
By the noblest path that a man can tread,
'Mid the jeers and the shouts
And the taunting flouts
Of fiends inflamed by revels and routs.

He had taken his stand on the fatal spot
When a man in the crowd, all eager and hot,
Rushed forward with cries that were lost and drowned
In the babel of tongues and confusion of sound
That arose from the crowd
Who shouted aloud
As the man stepped forth whose death they had vowed.

Too late ! too late ! the guillotine fell,
But the man in the crowd still had something to tell,
Though the ignorant people began to deride
When he said 'twas for him the victim had died,
 " He's wrong in the head "
 Was all they said,
And they turned to their loathsome work instead.

A fountain now stands on that deep-stained spot,
Whose waters can never efface nor outblot
The terrible work of that terrible day,
Nor that noble deed which will live for aye,
 Or as long as the light
 And his sister the night
Their courses continue in time's long flight.



Sunrise on St. Angelo.

THE daylight is dawning,
Away with the awning !
And let us behold
Yon grand sheet of gold,
The mountain-tops bathing,
And all the Earth swathing
In colours of amber,
As forth from his chamber
Steps Phœbus, ascending,
His glory extending
To mortals on Earth—
All hail to his birth !



Sunset over Ischia.

THE daylight is waning,
The mountain-tops staining
With purple and red,
As down to his bed
Great Phœbus, descending,
His pilgrimage ending,
To Luna gives place,
Who, with infinite grace,
Comes forward to greet
Her brother's retreat,
As, bidding good night,
He passes from sight.



Vesuvius.

By trelliss'd vine, o'er purple sea,
Vesuvius, I gaze on thee ;
Thou hast a crown of golden hue,
A wreath, more fleecy than the ewe,
And curls, the gift of Nature's hand,
Needing no artificial band,
That cluster round thy lofty brow—
The noblest of Earth's monarchs thou !
Thy tresses floating in the wind,
Which mortal hand can never bind,
Now wave in circles to the west,
And now obey the south wind's hest—

Sure many a monarch envies thee,
Thou pearl of Nature's armoury !
And all around thee clustering vines,
Whose every branch thy foot entwines,
And pays thee homage with its fruit,
Full bursting drops on every shoot ;
While from thy summit may be seen,
'Cross fields of lava, slopes of green,
The fairest vision, passing grand,
Recalling tales of fairyland—
The azure sea and hills of snow,
A toiling city far below,
Whose glistening roofs of every hue
Are set in vaults of heaven's blue,
And graceful islets in the sea—
What earthly king surpasseth thee,
Vesuvius ?—*adoro te.*



Capri.

FAIR island, whose incumbent form

Lies unprotected from the waves
That rise at bidding of the storm,

Of his unbridled will the slaves,
How camest thou into the world?

Wert by some giant hand uphurled
From out the bosom of the earth,

That erst rejoiced to give thee birth?
Or wert thou Nature's child, the land

To deck whose beauty thine enhances,
A simple offering from the hand

That gave the light which on thee dances?
Whose beetling crags frown on the waves
That dash against the echoing caves,

Effulgent with their silver light,
The handiwork of fairy sprite—
Such brightness as is never seen
Save where some fairy sprite hath been.
Thou tempt'st the stranger from afar
 Amongst thy olives to recline,
To taste how full and luscious are
 The fruits that cluster on the vine.
Thou draw'st the painter with thine art,
 Infecting him, as is thy duty,
With power to drink in and impart
 Imagination from thy beauty.
Nay more, thou dost infect the race
That habit thee ; on every face
Which 'longs to Grecian men and maids
Is writ the beauty that pervades
Thy beauteous form, 'thou island queen,
Say where thy compeer may be seen !

De Minimis Curat Sapiens.

THAT trifles, light as air and slender,
Momentous issues oft engender
Needs little demonstration ;
An apple's fall, some people say,
Disclosed to Newton, like a ray
Of light, Earth's gravitation.

Had Cleopatra's nose been crooked,
Or but the merest trifle hooked,
'Tis difficult to guess
What might have been ; the race of man
Might now be something greater than
It is, or something less.

Two precious days, lost in the strife
Of party warfare, cost the life
Of England's hero, Gordon ;
A dread disease, which none could cure,
Was found to yield before the pure
And little stream of Jordan.

What gentle sound the trickling rills
Make as they murmur through the hills,
Softer than hum of bee !
Yet joining hands upon the plain
They fight their way unto the main
All irresistibly.

Our life is but a silken thread,
At slightest touch it snaps—is dead,
Alone it may not stand ;
But yet humanity's great coil
Hath spanned the earth ; its sum of to
Hath conquered sea and land.

The busy little creeping thing,
That straight before the sight takes wing
To breathe the air of heaven,
Reminds us that a life of toil,
Whose roots strike not a deeper soil,
In vain, in vain is given.

The lesson all may draw, who strive
To extract the honey from the hive
Of history, is this ;
Great things have often small beginnings,
Collected pence make ample winnings,
Cura de minimis.

True Love.

Two hearts that beat with sympathetic motion,
And never varying tuneful harmony,
Unbroken by the stern necessity,
Which 'tween them keeps the boundless, trackless Ocean.

When will that stern necessity unbend
And knit their frames, whose souls are one, delighting
In firm indissoluble bonds, uniting
Their hopes and longings for a happier end ?

Swift comes the change ; her mantle round them flung,
Fair Fortune smiles on hearts so bravely striving,
And with her arts, that vanquish man's contriving,
She draws them to the ladder's topmost rung.

That rung is Union ; no happier fate
Desire they than a life-long close embrace,
As once again they seek the trysting-place
In preparation for a holier state.

Once more they tread the beaten path that lies
 Across the mead, and past the buried holly,
 To where the yew, albeit melancholy,
Invites a welcome shade from curious eyes.

Draw we a veil before that Union tender,
 'Tis not for curious eyes to note the gladness,
 That, welling up from depths of pent-up sadness,
Will perfect, lasting happiness engender.

Despair and Hope.

You knew not my two little girls?
My Nell with her clustering curls
That nestled around her head,
And Dolly whose eyes with light
Danced like some star of night?
And now to rest they're laid for ever—dead!
Their little life, our only comfort, sped!

A happy mother am I
To have two Angels in heaven!
Yet in vain to staunch my grief
The live-long day I've striven.
My heart is full, though my soul rejoices,
When I think I hear their little angel voices.

How we loved their tiny prattle
And busy never-ceasing rattle,
As they played around!
To us the sound

Of their pattering feet
Was as music sweet ;
But now they have left our home of love
And gone to the home Christ tells us of.

I sit in my chair all day,
Heavy my heart with grief,
My prayer, for I try to pray,
Shrivels up as a blighted leaf ;
Sometimes I strive to hear
The voices as of yore,
For I love to think them near,
Though that be nevermore.

Then I dry the tears,
For I have no fears
We shall meet again,
Though I cannot tell when ;
But I feel it certain
That one day the curtain
Dividing our life from theirs
Will lift—maybe—unawares—
And I shall clasp them again once more
On that far distant sunny shore,
And hold them so for ever, evermore.

The Art of Living.

"LET us eat and drink for to-morrow we die "
Are but foolish words and a gluttonous cry, .
'Tis eating that drives us the sod beneath,
For "most men dig their graves with their teeth,"
And some women too,
If report says true.

" Men eat to live and not live to eat ;"
That song is dinned into childhood's ears,
'Tis not very true when life is sweet,
And still less true as we grow into years,
Though our old friend, the gout,
Finds the weak spot out.

" Live wisely," my friend, " and not too well "
Is the best advice that I have to give,
Though the use of advice I never could tell—
The liver will tell us how best to live ;

But to keep some good wine
For your life's decline
Is a golden rule,
And a word to the wise,
Which none will despise,
Save an out and out fool !

The Poets of the Day.¹

YE critics all, come gather round,
And hearken to my lay,
For am not I enrolled among
The "poets of the day"?

What though I pay my footing for
This honour to my name,
No jot care I how crooked the path
That carries me to fame!

Each page may cost my scanty purse
A guinea or a half;
'Tis cheap if for so slight a sum
My friends may weep or laugh.

¹ Under a misapprehension of the character of a work bearing this title, I sent up a short poem for insertion under a *nom de plume*. Finding that the insertion was saddled with the condition that I should take a copy of the work for each page that the poem occupied at a cost of half a guinea, I asked to have the poem returned, promising a shorter substitute. This was intended to be the substitute, but the exchange was never effected.

Sure none will grudge an honour by
Such lofty means obtained,
Too long the ladder's foot I've pressed,
But now the top I've gained !

And this my song shall ever be—
Proclaimed on life's highway—
“Long live the man who thus befriends
“The ‘Poets of the day!’”


The Galley-Slave.

DOOMED to a life of servitude and bondage,
Herding with basest criminals, for ever
Chained to the oar in expiation of the
Sin of a moment.

Torn by a thousand blows that fall upon me,
Lashed by a thousand agonies within me,
Spurned as a leper by the world around, an
Object of loathing.

Branded with Cain's curse, nevermore on earth to
Feel the embrace of all that life holds dearest,
Children all taught to hate the name of Him who
Gave them their being.

God alone knows and feels the sinner's anguish,
Punished on earth, in deepest degradation,
He doth my body purify, and make me
Fit for His presence.



The Captive Eagle.

THE mountain eagle in captivity,
Fast chained to earth and bound in misery,
Beholds the first faint blush of morning light
Disclose his native mountain-top to sight,
And strives impatiently from earth to rise,
And wave his pinions towards the open skies,
Till with an effort great he bursts his chain,
And soars above the murky earth again,
Topping the brooding cloud that separates
The sun from earth, which eagerly awaits
His warm life-giving rays ; there freed from care
He drinks the sweetness of the heavenly air.

The Pleasures of Eastbourne.¹

A TRIP to the sea ! a trip to the sea
Did ever you hear such a chorus of glee,
As one and all rise with a bound from their seat,
And hug their old Dad from his head to his feet ?
For the family's large, and runs to all sizes ;
And there's a terrible din when the weather glass rises,
But the comely old *Mater* comes in for her share,
For I'm certain there lives not a worthier pair.

But where shall it be ? With joy on their faces
They search for the pick of the watering-places ;
This has a parade, and here one can paddle,
While the little one plumps for a pony and saddle,
And all are agreed that there must be a band
And they certainly must have a fine stretch of sand,
So Ramsgate and Margate, Deal, Folkestone, and Dover,
They go through the list, turn it over and over,

Published in the *Eastbourne Chronicle*.



Till at last they decide that, for pleasure all round,
A better than Eastbourne can hardly be found.

The pleasures of Eastbourne are great beyond measure,
To find them half out would tax your whole leisure ;
There's first the Parade, a Sabbath day's march,
Be your legs both as straight and as tall as a larch,
With tiers upon tiers, from the Fort to the Head,
'Twould tire the best legs that ever did tread,
And boats without end ; you can row, you can sail,
You can spin, you can trawl, you can hook, you can
rail,

For respectable watermen swarm on all sides.
There's Tyrrel and Tutt, and a number of Hides,
And others, whose names will be found in large letters
At the stern of the boats they let out to their betters ;
While for all who're inclined to be less energetic,
There's the steamer that's christened the "Shilling
Emetic."

And then there's the pier, a full quarter mile long,
Which during the season exhibits a throng
Of holiday makers, all out for enjoyment,
Forgetful for once of that bugbear "employment ;"
In the morning at twelve the professor of swimming
May be found taking headers, or gracefully skimming

The crests of the waves, or successfully striving
To vie with the sleek-bodied porpoise in diving ;
But joy follows joy, and at three there's a group
Of artists belonging to Mariott's troupe,
Who play and who sing and who dance to the laughter
And shouts of applause that are sure to come after,
And the day is concluded with strains of the Rhine
band,
Whose excellent playing attests them a fine band.

And oh ! for the sands, what a glorious reach !
Though equalled in length by the size of the beach,
Where treasures abound without any delusion—
Anemones, seaweed, and shells in profusion,
Agates and Choanites, gems of the ocean,
How to give them their right names I haven't a
notion,
But if you've a fancy to know what you've got,
That prince of collectors will tell you what's what,
Who dwells in the Wish, to the west of the town,
A snug little box that belongs to the Crown.
Then tired of the beach, there's Devonshire Park
Kept open to all from daylight to dark,
With tennis and racquets and cricket and music,
To enjoy which there's hardly an invalid too sick.

Do you wish for a horse? There's Bradford's and
Weston's ;

But who can decide which lets out the best 'uns ?

And here I must end ; for to tell all the pleasures

Of Eastbourne—enumerate half of its treasures—

Would fill a whole page ; suffice it to state

My party enjoyed themselves early and late ;

And when they returned to their home from the sea


Their cheeks told a tale of rare jollity ;

While the *Pater* declared that, of all places, Eastbourne

Was the place where his purse had been quite the least
drawn.

Life.

A LITTLE folding of the hands to sleep—
And all the world, with its attendant cares,
Is blotted out for ever. What is life?
Yon lovely flower, that boastfully exposes
Its beauty to the sun, this very night
Before the sneaping frost will quail—and droop :
The painted butterfly, arrayed in bloom,
Softer than down, and hues inimitable,
Knows not to-morrow's sun ; the little lark,
That carols blithely as he soars to heaven,
The first to send his greeting to the morn,
Must give that wealth of song to satisfy
The pampered gourmet's dainty appetite :
The monarch of the pool, that proudly leaps,
All conscious of his strength, before an hour
Has passed, by single hair made captive, spite
Of lightning leaps and rushes, unavailing



As mighty Cœur de Lion's two-edged sword,
To cut in twain the silken handkerchief,
Will yield his proud existence. What is life?
Is it reality, or but a dream?
The child, that gazes on the hoary locks
Of one who treads upon the brink of time,
Looks through a long, long vista, and beholds
An ever-changing, never-ending round
Of keen enjoyment ; while the old, old man
Looks back upon his time of youth, as though
He were emerging from a sleep of dreams—
And he is still among his cherished playmates,
The child of yesterday. See yonder maid,
That lightly trips to keep the appointed hour,
The sunshine lighting up her face, aglow
With hope and joy. All is reality ;
Yet scarce an hour has passed, and she returns
The sun now set behind the hill, too full
Of sympathy to shine upon a face
From which has fled all trace of joy and pleasure.
There, in that garret, lives the shrunken miser,
Insatiable and unsated, ever bending
His form decrepid o'er a pile of gold
Now worn with counting. Does he try to sleep?
One constant dream, inevitable, pursues him—

For, while he slumbers, thieves have rudely broken
The sacred door, on which no other eyes
Than his have ever looked, and even now
Are carrying off that precious pile of metal,
His one and only love. Is this the life
We so much prize ? or what of him, whose aim
Is one perpetual climbing up the ladder—
Restless ambition striving after fame,
A struggle for the topmost pinnacle,
Which leaves the gainer still unsatisfied ?
Who has not seen some restless vain old man,
Cherished by princes, and the flattered idol
Of fickle multitudes ? Has he not gained
The very zenith of his heart's desires,
And yet would struggle still ? Put we away
These empty strivings, momentary pleasures :
Remember we that life is but a span,
That all our boasted strength, our vaunted learning,
No more affect the sweeping revolutions
Of ever-rolling time than drops of rain
Perceptibly increase the mighty volume
Of boundless seas. Away with false ambition !
Turn we to truer, healthier, nobler pleasures,
Contentment, peace, for good of others striving,

Humility and gentleness, twin sisters ;
And welcome we the quick approach of death,
That brings us nearer to the gate of Life—
To Happiness beyond man's understanding.

Sonnet.

O THAT the gift of speech should be a power
To shut men's hearts against that nobler gift,
The gift of reason, and to cast adrift
Life's fairest offspring for that specious flower
Of gaudy rhetoric, which hour by hour
Is dangled 'fore the braying multitude !
Now swaying them, as trees of forest wood
Before the wind ; now, as the vernal shower,
Which bringeth up the choking weeds apace,
Making men's heated passions swell and rise,
Till their vain ravings touch the very skies ;
Here hath Philosophy no biding place,
She lags behind outstripped, in the race,
Although Truth's image flashes in her eyes.

Sonnet.

WHAT words can paint the Sun's pervading might ?
The flowers extract their colours from his beams,
Fair Luna with his borrowed plumage gleams,
The whole earth revels in his glorious light ;
And when he downward wings his evening flight,
All Nature slumbers in a sleep profound,
Oblivion reigns o'er all ; one only sound
Of troubled waters lingers through the night ;
But forth he comes again, his advent writ
In golden characters upon the sky,
The mountain tops proclaim his majesty,
The earth again in gorgeous colours lit ;
Art thou some god that holds man's destiny,
Or God-created for man's benefit ?

Sonnet.

How sad the hour when still night steals around,
 Exposing to our view its distant treasures,
Hushing to silence with their wealth of sound
 The birds that carol to day's brighter pleasures ;
The stars may twinkle in their deep-lined nest,
 And wrap our hearts with wonder and amaze,
The hush of busy life may tell of rest,
 The nightingale may sing enchanting lays ;
I love not night ; I love the glorious day,
 The sun that beams upon us in his might,
Warming to new-found life the glad array
 Of beauteous forms that vanish with the night.
So am I like some lover left forlorn,
 Till night depart and I embrace the morn.

Sonnet.

How interwoven with our memories
 Live the dead ashes of Love's furious raging !
That stirred the soul to seeming ecstasies,
 All other passions and desires assuaging ;
Then fancy wanders in delights unknown,
 The birds sing with unwonted harmony,
The silver moon invites us forth alone,
 The murmuring brook is full of sympathy ;
But, like the blast that bursts upon the spring
 And nips the forward buds and checks their growing,
There comes a time of rude awakening,
 When others pluck the fruits of Cupid's sowing ;
We love again, but in more sober fashion,
Our second loves have no consuming passion.

Sonnet.

IRELAND, too oft thy centuries of woes
Have been the theme of agitator's thunder,
Rending like rocks two sister hearts asunder
That Nature never fashioned to be foes ;
Time was, nor long ago, when in the name
Of hospitality the stranger Saxon
Thou welcomed'st ; now thy sullen brow's contraction
Doth mar thy hospitality's fair fame ;
Shake off thy sullenness, join hands with those
That stretch in brotherhood across the ocean,
Wipe out the bloody past, drink deep a potion
Of Lethe's drug, the hateful chapter close
Whence this unfathomed bitterness arose,
And quench for ever thy intense emotion.

Sonnet.

BRITAIN, desirest thou the name of "great" ?
Thou hast a sister by dissensions riven,
Stricken with crime, to deep despairing driven,
Encircled in the toils of hapless fate ;
Be merciful in striving to be just,
If she be weak, help with thy strength her weakness,
If she be vengeful, then receive in meekness
The fruit of thy own past dominion's lust ;
With all her faults she is thy sister still,
And she is fair, her life-blood warmly flowing,
With gratitude her warm affections glowing
At the bestowal of thy heart's goodwill ;
Though tardy justice thou art late bestowing,
Great be thy name, if this thou dost fulfil.

Sonnet.

WHEN from my couch I watched morn's silver streak,
My thoughts too strong for slumber's gentle wooing,
I heard a voice upon the stillness break,
Melodious as the turtle's plaintive cooing ;
It seemed the echo of a saddened life,
Of joys and pleasures chased away by sorrow,
Of days of grief and momentary strife,
Perchance succeeded by a happier morrow ;
Then breaking forth from notes of sombre hue,
It burst into a joyous song of gladness,
And, like the sunlight drinking up the dew,
Dispelled with magic touch all trace of sadness,
Till of my thoughts so hap'ly disencumbered,
I yielded to the charm and gently slumbered.

Sonnet.

WHEN in the turn of fortune's fitful wheel
I feel myself forgotten, hated, spurned ;
When youth is fled and there is none to heal,
And she is gone to whom in youth I turned ;
When melancholy, like an iron cage,
Has fastened round me close her deadly pall,
And dire disease, accompaniment of age,
Has feasted on my substance and my all ;
Then, tired of life and surfeited with years,
I cry to heaven with all my ebbing breath,
Cast all before it, all the pains, the fears,
The bonds of sickness, only loosed by death ;
And, as I cry to heaven, my heartstrings rending,
I hear God's voice, His grace to me extending.

Sonnet.

METHOUGHT I saw to heavenwards ascending
Columns of purest, whitest smoke ; and when
Awestruck and wond'ring I drew nearer, then
Methought I saw in supplication bending
A mighty race, with cries the heavens rending ;
And to my quest what this might mean one saith
"These columns are our prayers ; for Life and Death
"Are even now in struggle fierce contending
"O'er our belovèd Prince ;" but, as I gazed
In sadness on his noble form and mien,
A light from heaven burst upon the scene—
Life conquered, and Death skulked away amazed.
And then the vision vanished, and I knew
It was a dream—Oh ! would that it were true !

Sonnet.

THE poet's fame lies in obscurity !

Come, let us dig this heap of words together

And set our whetted wits to search out whether

Deep down there be not hidden cunningly

Some absolute idea, one precious thought

That pays the burrowing ; down, down, deep down ;

This cataclysm of words will only drown

The feeble understanding ; gold is sought

In the bowels of the earth ; base metal lies

More nearly to the touch ; what ! not yet found ?

Shall we, like moles, toil ever underground,

Drawing no light from heaven ? Alas ! time flies ;

Our strength is spent, our search is all in vain,

Too great a poet this for man's weak brain !

Sonnet.

THERE is a borderland 'twixt sleep and waking
Where thought wings an intoxicating flight,
Its feverish thirst at wells of fancy slaking,
Unfettered in the stillness of the night ;
Such thoughts as keep the weary heart from aching,
And fill the buoyant spirit with delight,
That fire the soul, a rapturous course uptaking
Or dreamily ascending to the height.
Dream on, thou waking dreamer ; soon the morn
Will rouse thee to reality's fierce strife,
The arrows of the world are tipped with scorn
And grief and cares, which sap the springs of life ;
Her joys are few, her sorrows who can number ?
Dream on, or let thy thoughts find rest in slumber.





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